

Influence of Nutritional and Health Education of Families and Communities on the School-Age Children for the Attainment of Universal Basic Education Goals in the Rural Riverine Areas of Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract : Pupils' health and nutrition are basically important to their schooling. The preponderance of avoidable deaths among children in Africa (WHO, 2000) may not be unconnected with the nutritional and health education status of families and communities that have their children as school clients. This study adopted a descriptive survey design focusing on the assessment of the level of nutritional and health education of families and community members in the rural riverine areas of Ogun State. Two research questions were raised. The Nutritional and Health Education of Families and Communities Inventory (NHEFCI) was used to collect data from 250 rural child-bearing aged women, and 0.73 test-retest reliability coefficient was established to determine the strength of the instrument. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages and mean in accordance with research questions raised in the study. The findings revealed amongst others: that 65% of the respondents had low level of nutritional and health education among the families and community members; while 72% had low level of awareness of the possible influence of nutritional and health education on the learning outcomes of the children. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that government should intensify efforts on sensitization, mass literacy campaign etc.; also improve upon the already existing School Feeding Programme in Nigerian primary schools to provide at least one balanced diet for children while in school; community health workers, social workers, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) should collaborate with international Organizations like UNICEF, UNESCO, WHO etc. to organize sensitization programmes for members of the rural riverine communities on the importance of meeting the health and nutritional needs of their children in order to attain their educational potentials.

Keywords : nutritional and health education, learning capacities, school-age children, universal basic education, rural riverine areas

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